



Association of Minnesota Counties

January 18, 2023

Chair Noor
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Noor and Members of the Human Services Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), an association representing all of Minnesota's 87 counties, we want to thank you for your work and leadership to address issues of homelessness within this committee. Counties across the state have come together to voice their collective concern for the rising numbers of homeless families and individuals. We write in support for the Pathway Home Act bill (HF444). Specifically, we want to highlight three of the items listed in the legislation that we strongly support.

Historic Funding for Emergency Shelter Facilities

Minnesota is facing an unsheltered homelessness crisis that is not just confined to the metro. County commissioners across the state agree that the rising trends and impacts of homelessness are not acceptable. Counties are seeing significant adverse impacts on unsheltered individuals and families, with correlating demands in county support services and financial resources. While we recognize emergency shelter beds are a short-term solution for individuals and families without permanent shelter, they are the starting point to gaining long-term stability and critical during Minnesota's harsh winters. Counties provide the opportunity to connect with a myriad of support services and programs, either directly or through partnerships with community-based organizations, which are vital to help people move from shelters to stable housing.

Increased and Ongoing Funding for the Emergency Services Program (ESP)

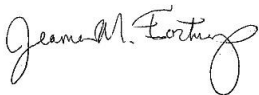
Counties strongly support the ESP as it is flexible funding and provides the ability to partner with local organizations serving homeless populations to meet the most urgent needs in an efficient way. An increase to ESP will impact every region in the state and provide for long-term solutions to address homelessness. Counties appreciate that the work to combat homelessness is multilayered and will require resources and partnerships outside of local and state governments. The meaningful increases included in this bill will provide much needed resources for a plethora of nonprofit and community service driven organizations to rely on.

\$9 million for the Transitional Housing Program (THP)

Along with responding to our unsheltered homelessness crisis, the Pathway Home Act includes funding for THP which is vital for many individuals and families leaving shelter. THP helps individuals and families obtain stable housing where they can develop good rental history while finding a permanent housing destination.

We urge the committee to support HF444 which provides a meaningful investment to move the needle on homelessness across the state. Counties stand by ready to offer our assistance and partnership in any way that is helpful to you as this session continues.

Sincerely,



Jeanna Fortney, Policy Analyst